

fashionable but also the healthy working-class mother prematurely weans her babe unconscious of the risks it will run, the ready way in which the married factory girl returns to the factory and leaves her newly-born infant unsuckled, the promiscuous distribution of leaflets instructing mothers how to artificially feed their babies, and so on. These and other indications clearly point to the influences that have been at work, and it cannot be imagined that the result has been other than the increase of hand-feeding."—(Sykes.)

#### NURSING A LEGAL RIGHT.

The right of the child to be nursed by the mother is recognized by at least one decision in our English Courts of Law. In the Divorce Court.—April 24th, 1906.

In the case of *McLaglen v. McLaglen*, Mr. Justice Bargrave Deane ordered a baby which had been forcibly carried off by the father to be returned to its natural food at its mother's breast. The natural right of the child prevailed over the common law right of the father.

#### DR. SYKES' ENQUIRY.

In St. Pancras, in 1904, it was ascertained that only about 60 per cent. of infants were wholly breast-fed; in 1905 the proportion had risen to 66.8 per cent. The actual numbers in each year were 457 breast-fed of 772 cases enquired into during 1904, and 530 of 793 cases in 1905.

In 1905 fuller enquiry was made into 277 cases of prematurely weaned infants, and the ages and causes of weaning ascertained. In 71 cases there was only partial weaning. Of the 206 cases in which there was premature complete weaning, it was found that 78 were weaned at birth, 73 within the first month, and 55 subsequently (mostly during the second and third month).

Of these cases prematurely weaned, it was found that from one-half to two-thirds were probably preventable. Now, if of the 33.2 per cent. of sucklings not wholly breast-fed in 1905, one-half can be prevented, it follows that 83.4 per cent. can be wholly breast-fed, and, if two-thirds can be prevented, nearly 89 per cent. can be breast-fed.

#### MILK.

No consideration of the subject of Infant Mortality, however brief, would be complete without some reference to the question of Milk Supply.

#### INFECTION.

There are three milk dangers to the baby, and the first is infection. Dirt is infection; that is, poison. Dirt in milk means millions upon millions of germs, and these increase in the milk with incredible rapidity. Hence the success which attends all efforts to reduce infant mortality by enabling the mothers to give their babies clean cow's milk at about the age of nine or ten months, which is the best time for weaning to begin.

Contamination may occur while milk is in the hands of the dairyman, the distributor or the consumer, and each one needs careful education and supervision by the health authorities, so that the milk may not poison the baby. Infected milk in the cause of the deadly diarrhoea of infancy.